

Psychology of Intimate Relationships, 3 credits
13:830:399:01
Thursdays 1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.
Psychology Building, GSAPP Side, Room A317
Fall, 2015

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Office Hours: Office hours for Professor Skean and the TAs are by appointment.

I. Course Description:

Welcome to the Psychology of Intimate Relationships. This course will explore the psychology of close (romantic) human relationships. Examples of topics covered are the biological bases of our need for relationship and of attraction, how relationships form and how they come apart, the value of both awareness of the self and empathy for the other in maintaining high quality relationships, and the impact of wider social and cultural factors.

This course aims to engage you both academically and personally. We will explore what the research tells us about relationships, but will be actively applying what we are learning in experiential ways. There is no factor more central to life satisfaction than the nature and quality of our closest relationships, and we can apply the knowledge base available to us to do a better job. You are likely to find that the literature contains much that may influence the way you look at relationships and at yourself.

II. Goals & Objectives:

1. To provide an overview of the research on the psychology of relationships and their underlying theories.
2. To explore specific content areas such as our need for relationships, attraction, attachment, factors involved in partner choice, understanding both our own emotions and those of others, maintaining and enhancing the quality of relationships, common problems, relationship dissolution and serious problems such as infidelity, domestic violence and addictions.
3. To apply these content areas to one's own life in order to deepen understanding of the material and to potentially improve one's own relationships and enhance capacities for reflective thinking.
4. To place our current understandings of intimate relationships in a historical and cultural framework.
5. To enhance critical thinking skills, particularly in applying research findings and clinical observations to an area long regarded as a mystery and somehow exempt from usual processes of teaching and learning.

III. Organization of the Class:

- Our goal is to engage you in learning in a variety of ways, placing your learning and grade in your own hands as much as possible.
- The class will alternate between time spent in the larger group and time spent in smaller group of 10-12 students with your own teaching assistant. If there is someone you would like to be in your group, as it can be rewarding to take a class with someone you would like to work and study with, let us know and we'll try to keep that in mind in the group assignments.

IV Emotional Demands:

- Some assignments in the course may be emotionally demanding. This is especially true of some of the project choices and some of the small group experiential exercises and discussions. We are aiming to engage you on multiple levels, to build emotional as well as intellectual intelligence. But such work is best done if you stay within the boundaries of what feels right for you. If you become upset in response to assignments, discuss this with your TA and/or with Professor Skean. **Let us know if you need help.** If you need to debrief an assignment, make some adjustments in it, pull back from participation in some elements of the course or would like our help in recommending resources for personal therapy or other ways of taking care of yourself, see us before or after class or make an appointment.
- Even though the TA's and professor are trained therapists, and we expect this experience to be an enriching factor in our teaching on this topic, the class is not therapy. A classroom setting cannot offer you the privacy and confidentiality and full focus on your welfare that therapy provides. With that in mind, know that you will not be pressured to share personal information beyond your comfort zone. When there are assignments that allow a personal exploration, there will also be alternatives that allow the same requirements to be filled in a more academic way.

IV. Required Readings:

The text for the class will be:

Bradbury, T.N., & Karney, B.R. (2013). *Intimate relationships* (2nd ed.). New York: Norton.
It is available in the bookstore and through online booksellers.

Other required articles and book chapters will be available on the course website.

V. Recommended and Resource Readings:

Coontz, S. (2006). *Marriage, a history: How love conquered marriage*. New York: Penguin.

Gottman, J., & Silver, N. (2015). *The seven principles for making marriage work*. (2nd ed.).
New York: Crown Publishing.

Gottman, J., & Jacobson, N. (2007). *When men batter women*. New York: Simon & Schuster.

Haidt, J. (2006). *The happiness hypothesis: Finding modern truth in ancient wisdom*. New York: Basic Books.

Hanson, R., U Mendius, R. (2009). *Buddha's brain: The practical neuroscience of happiness, love and wisdom*. Oakland: New Harbinger Publications, Inc.

Johnson, S. *Love sense: The revolutionary new science of love*. New York: Little Brown & Co.

Panksepp, J., & Biven, L. (2012). *The archaeology of mind: Neuroevolutionary origins of human emotions*. New York: Norton.

Tatkin, S. (2012). *Wired for love*. Oakland: New Harbinger Publications, Inc.

Vaughn, D. (1990). *Uncoupling: Turning points in intimate relationships*. New York: Vintage

VI. Course Website:

Go to Sakai.rutgers.edu, log in using your netID and password, then click on the class website. We will be making extensive use of this website. Your readings and assignments will be posted here, as well as the most-up-to-date syllabus. Please check the website frequently for any announcements and updates.

VII. Grading:

Grades will be based on class attendance and participation, three multiple-choice exams, a individual project, and a group project. The breakdown will be as follows:

Attendance/Participation	5 points/class attended up to total of:	60 points
Hourly Exams	3 in class multiple-choice exams: (3 given, lowest score dropped)	100 points
Individual Project	Assignment chosen from options:	70 points
Group Project	Small group project:	70 points
Total Available Points:		300 points

Number of Points	Grade
270 – 300	A
255 – 269.99	B+
240 – 254.99	B
225 – 239.99	C+
210 – 224.99	C
180 – 209.99	D
Below 180	F

Attendance/Participation: The points assigned to this category reflect how important it is that you come to class and participate. Please arrange your schedule so that you can be present for the full time from 1:00 to 4:00 on Thursdays. If you do need to miss a class, please let us know.

Hourly Exams: There will be three of these with the lowest score dropped and your points for this category being the sum of the highest two scores. We will be trying something a little different and experimental with the course exams. Each exam will consist of 20 questions. You

will first take the exam in the usual way, on your own. This will be half your grade. You will then, in small groups take the exam as a group, with full access to each other and any books and materials. Each group hands in one final version of the exam. This will be the second half of your grade. You will also be told the answers once the group hands in its exam, so that you will leave knowing the answers to all the questions. If you are interested in the philosophy behind these changes, watch this video on YouTube where Eric Mazur discusses how our traditional forms of student assessment kills rather than enlivens learning:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8sh6wsUFQT0&index=2&list=PLAQ_JBEFaeUxPxeYmVVkKNxRlfZxyUbOW

Individual Project: There are a number of different course project options, allowing you to choose from a range of topics. We encourage you to make a choice based on your own interests and goals. Topics are listed under the “Resources” section of our Sakai site. Each topic has its own folder beginning with “Course Project Option.” *You only need to choose one project.* These will be due on December 15th. A rubric used for grading projects is available in most of the project folders, and you should check your paper against the rubric’s requirements to earn maximum points.

Group Project: Each small group, with the help and support of their TA, will create a class presentation. Working in groups and being a good team member are important skills to cultivate. Group collaboration is essential in almost any career. It can also be fun and rewarding and a good way to get to know each other. Your TA is there to help and support and mentor the group as you work on your project.

The goal of the project is to convey the key issues, concepts, facts or learning points in a way that makes them interesting and accessible to the class. Groups are encouraged to design their presentations to maximize creativity and experiential involvement of the class, for example, through:

- Roleplays
- Case discussions
- Use of film clips, Youtube, other media
- Making your own video
- Quiz or game show formats;
- A structured debate
- Videotaping interviews with knowledgeable subjects
- Designing, running and reporting on a small research project

Each group should plan on a time frame of 75 minutes. We will have four groups, and each group will present in one of the two final classes, with those classes being split between two presentations. This project will take the place of a final exam.

The written requirement of this assignment is to develop a document that will serve as a resource on the topic for your peers. These can be "Fact Sheets," containing the salient points in the area in outline form, key definitions, and/or recommended resources and readings. You may make copies for each member of the class, if you will use them during your presentation, or you may send them to me electronically for posting on Sakai.

VIII. Additional course policies:

- **Attendance & missed classes:** Attendance is essential. We expect that a great deal of the learning in this class will come from what we do together. Class activities, discussions, demonstrations and videos can't be replicated outside of class.
- **Missed Exams:** Since the lowest score of the three exams will be dropped, if you have to miss an exam, the average of your other two exams will count as your exam score. In the rare event that you miss two out of three exams, discuss these extraordinary circumstances with your TA and we will figure out a solution.
- **Academic Accommodations:** Students requiring accommodations should notify the course instructors and provide the necessary documentation supporting the need for accommodations.
- **Academic Integrity:** University policies on cheating and plagiarism will be adhered to. The University's academic integrity policy can be reviewed at (<http://ctaar.rutgers.edu/integrity/policy.html>)
- **Clickers:** We will be using clickers to enhance engagement, assess where people are with the material, take opinion polls, do some in-class experiments, so we do ask that you bring a clicker with you to the larger group.



These are the clickers to purchase. The one on the left is the first generation clicker and will work fine if you happen to have one. The one on the right is the current generation of the simple clicker and the one the bookstore has in stock. If you happen already to have a fancier iClicker with an LCD screen, that will work also, but it is more expensive, and this simple clicker works for our needs. Other brands (like Turning Technologies) unfortunately won't work.

IX. Course calendar (Subject to adjustment if needed.)

Date	Class	Topic
September 3	1	Introduction to the course The importance of our relationships to our health and wellbeing Brief history of marriage
September 10	2	Conceptual Frameworks: The lenses through which we view and research relationships
September 17	3	Developing Emotional Strength: Emotional Awareness and Self-Regulation

September 24	4	Sex, Sexuality and Gender Roles
October 1	5	Attraction and Mate Selection
October 8	6	Personality and Personal History
October 15	7	Communicating Closeness
October 22	8	Culture and Partnering
October 29	9	Conflict in Relationships
November 5	10	Couple Therapy
November 12	11	Serious Dilemmas in Close Relationships: Addiction, Domestic Violence
November 19	12	Serious Dilemmas in Close Relationships: Infidelity Forgiveness and Repair
November 26	----	THANKSGIVING – NO CLASS
December 3	13	Student Group Presentations
December 10	14	Student Group Presentations